



Governor, Commissioner Praise Staff for Professionalism in Anthrax Response

State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. recently conveyed the appreciation of Governor Frank O'Bannon and expressed his own thanks to staff of the ISDH Laboratories for their expert work in response to potential bioterrorist threats.

Lab employees whose work directly or indirectly involved the handling and analysis of the many samples of suspected substances submitted by a concerned public, each received a personally addressed letter from Dr. Wilson. Ceremonies were held at the labs December 10.

Dr. Wilson's letter reads, "Governor O'Bannon has expressed his personal appreciation for the professional manner in which the recent



STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER GREG WILSON, M.D. (left) recognizes ISDH Lab employees at ceremonies December 10. Employees receiving letters of appreciation: Brent Barrett, Eva Buis, Tom Cronau, Dave Dotson, Richard Dufour, Lois Duncan, Rashmi Fansler, Christine Feaster, Mark Glazier, Rose Grimes, Craig Hinshaw, Karl Leatherman, Dave Nauth, Jon Radosevic, Kellie Ralston, Kevin Richards, Ron Sanderson, Kimberly Walls, Kenny Washington, and Mary Williams.

Photo by Daniel Axler

bioterrorists' threats have been handled by the Indiana State Department of Health. This has been a period of great uncertainty and anxiety in our state and the general public looked to the ISDH for expertise and support in meeting this difficult challenge.

"I want to thank you for your extraordinary dedication and commitment to the public health of the citizens of Indiana. We have received many compliments and messages of appreciation for the management of this situation. You have been a major contributor in this effort and we appreciate your dedication. Today Indiana has a much better understanding of the importance of public health in protecting our basic quality of life."

ISDH Contract Dentist Applies Forensic Dentistry Skills at Ground Zero, N.Y.C.

James Oldham, D.D.S., contract dentist, ISDH Oral Health, put his dental skills to unusual use during two weeks in the month of October—not in Indiana, but New York City. He was intensely involved in examining the remains of victims of the World Trade Center Twin Towers attack.

He went there as a member of the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team at the request of the U.S. Public Health Service.

On September 24, he joined a varied team of specialists, each with special expertise, to help identify victims of the tragedy.

"Two shifts, each with 50-100 specialists, worked 12-hour shifts on a 7-24 basis. I worked the 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift," Dr. Oldham said.

According to Dr. Oldham, the more cross-confirmations

that could be made by a variety of specialists, the faster victim identity could be confirmed.

For example, scars, moles, and tattoos, together with dental records, helped make positive IDs quickly. In some cases, however, with the availability of only small body fragments with no distinctive identifying characteristics, the only resort was DNA matching.

He says that besides the forensic dentists, specialists included police, forensic pathologists, morticians, computer programmers, data entry and logistical staff.

By intentionally not reading the obituaries, Dr. Oldham says that emotional involvement with the work was reduced significantly by not knowing the victims—until he began to think about the people whose pictures and stories were posted on utility poles and building walls by relatives. And there were lots of pictures. In some places, entire walls of buildings were papered over with



James Oldham, D.D.S.

Photo by Daniel Axler

Safety Tips for Happy Holidays

The holidays can pose some special safety issues for families.

"No one wants a trip to the emergency room to spoil their holidays," said Charlene Graves, M.D., medical director for injury prevention at the Indiana State Department of Health. "The best way to avoid holiday hazards is to follow some basic safety tips."

These family holiday safety tips are courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Fire Protection Association:

Toy Safety

- Follow the recommended age ranges on toy packages. Toys that are too advanced could be a safety hazard for younger children.

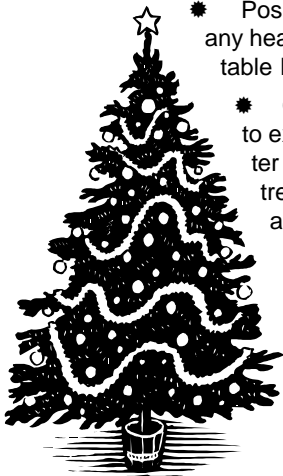


- Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he or she has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully. If the toy is appropriate for your child, show him or her how to use it properly.

- Be careful of holiday gift wrapping, like bags, paper, ribbons, and bows. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child.

- Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games and balls with a diameter of one and three-quarters of an inch or less. Children under age eight can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons.
- Watch for strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

Tree Safety



- Position your tree a good distance away from any heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, or portable heaters.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Check all tree lights—even if you've just purchased them—before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets, or loose connections.
- If you purchase an artificial tree, make sure it's labeled fire-resistant. If your artificial tree is metallic, don't put lights on it because they'll create a fire hazard.

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Food Safety

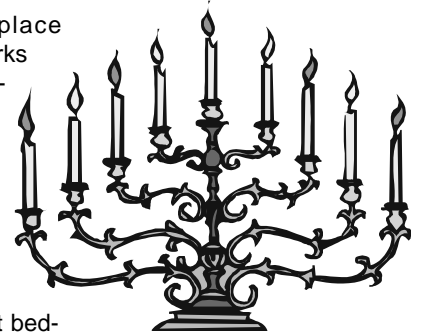
- Bacteria are often present in raw foods. Fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits.
- Be sure to keep hot liquids and foods away from the edges of counters and tables, where they can be easily knocked over by a young child's exploring hands.
- Never put a spoon used to taste food back into food without washing it.



- Wash your hands frequently, and make sure your children do the same.
- Always keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, and use separate utensils when preparing them.
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.
- Foods that require refrigeration should never be left at room temperature for more than two hours.

Home Safety

- Never** leave a burning candle unattended.
- Candles should always be burned in proper candleholders or bases.
- Keep lighted candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- Avoid burning candles near combustible materials.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially outside each bedroom.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen to prevent sparks from igniting newspapers, carpeting, curtains, and upholstery.
- Only use the fireplace when you're home and awake. Extinguish the fire when you go out or at bedtime.
- Plugging lights directly into sockets and limiting the use of extension cords will cut down on the chances of a fire.
- If an electrical cord feels warm to the touch, it's probably working too hard and is a fire hazard.
- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.
- Ask your neighbors if they have a gun before sending your kids over to play. If the answer is yes, you need to make absolutely sure that all guns are stored unloaded and locked—ideally in a gun safe—with ammunition locked separately. Include the question along with other things you might normally discuss before sending your child to someone's house.
- Keep a laminated list with all of the important phone numbers you or a babysitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. Include the police and fire departments, your health care provider, and the Indiana Poison Control Center (800-382-9097).



Video Draws Requests

The text of the inspirational video from the Sexual Harassment Prevention and Awareness seminars presented by John Davis, Human Resources, is reproduced below. A number of attendees requested a copy of these words by Sondra Thiederman, Ph.D., an internationally known diversity training professional.

Getting Along:

Words of Encouragement

Just because we are equal, does not mean we are the same.

We do not have to be twins to be brothers, to be sisters.

Relax and enjoy the differences around you.

Be yourself.

A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval.

E pluribus unum. From many, one.

Be kind, say thanks. give credit. empathize.

Read, listen, observe.

To listen is to learn about yourself, about others.

Don't be afraid to say: "Help me understand." "I know how you feel." "What can I do to help?"

Each of us must be the change we want in the world.

Practice patience with yourself. with others.

Practice awareness with yourself. with others.

Practice makes perfect.

Laugh at yourself not at others.

Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.

As we let our light shine, we allow others to do the same.

Show your delight with the world.

We may have come over on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now.

Do the right thing.

Remember what it feels like to be different.

Never pre-judge.

Never put people in boxes,

Never lower your standards.

Don't hold back compliments.

Accept responsibility for making relationships work.

Judge people by the content of their character not by the color of their skin.

Everyone sometimes feels confused; feels left out; feels afraid.

Be true to yourself; to your values.

Stretch your cultural comfort zone.

Reach out.

Observe.

Ask.

Look for what we share.

From the video "Getting Along," copyright 1997 Dr. Sondra Thiederman 800-858-4478 www.Thiederman.com



Holiday Photos by Daniel Axler

DECKED HALLS, AND A TRIMMED TREE (left), courtesy of the efforts of Linda Stenmoe (right), Data Analysis, Epidemiologic Resource Center, are enjoyed by ERC colleagues (l. to r.) Michele Starkey and Atossa Rahmanifar.

THE FINANCE DIVISION TREE (below) gets a trimming by division staff Linda Brown (left) and by (right photo, left to right) Marca Secuskie, Sara Saypack, and Penny Schreiber.

OUTSIDE 2 NORTH Meridian Street ISDH offices (2nd row below), to the north can be seen the festively decorated monument on the circle (left), and to the south, the cherub who appears only for the holiday above the clock at the Circle Center Mall.

Images of the Season

... in and around the Indiana State Department of Health.



CANNED GOODS and household items (below) are among **1,016** items donated December 18 by employees both at the ISDH laboratories and administrative offices for distribution to the needy through the Salvation Army.



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The *Indiana State Department of Health Express* is a bi-weekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. To submit news items, call (317) 233-7336 or send information to: ISDH Express, Office of Public Affairs, 2 N. Meridian St., Section 2E, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3003. Inquiries should be directed to:

David W. Pilbrow, Editor
Telephone (317) 233-7336
Fax: (317) 233-7873
dpilbrow@isdh.state.in.us
<http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>

Margaret Joseph, Director of Public Affairs

Gregory A. Wilson, M.D.
State Health Commissioner

Michael A. Hurst
Deputy State Health Commissioner and
Special Counsel to the Commissioner